



CASW Safety Advice Article #1

Headline: Be the Difference As A Farm Employer

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Word Count: 644

Farm owners run a business. A farm requires the same commitment to succeed, the same dedication to hard work, good products and of course, a commitment to safety just like other businesses. One hallmark of a successful business is an engaged and well-trained workforce.

Training employees is good business and an important area of risk management on any farm. Well trained, safe and healthy employees are essential for the smooth functioning of any farming operation. The loss of an employee due to an accident can have a severe ripple effect and create many more hidden costs than the farm owner may realize. As well as the usual compensation and medical costs, there is down time in production, training time for replacement employees, repairs to damaged equipment plus the psychological effect an accident has on other employees and families.

The benefits of incorporating orientation and training, including health and safety information, include a more confident and competent employee. This means that the worker is more engaged in the work place and in turn will take personal ownership in their work. Not only does training help prevent potential accidents but also empowers employees to do their best work.

A very important step towards managing risk on the farm, is training farm workers in occupational health and safety principles. A training program for health and safety orientation of seasonal agricultural workers will enable farm owners and managers to train their seasonal staff on basic safety principles, recognizing and assessing hazards, and applying hazard prevention and control measures to protect them as they perform their duties.

The worker needs to be well trained and to understand their job tasks and the importance of their job to the larger picture. Never assume that someone has the “common sense” to work safely. Making an assumption like that can be dangerous, especially where a young or new worker is concerned. Orientation to a new workplace is very important for safety. Workers need to be orientated when they arrive at the workplace. They need to know the facilities, the equipment, emergency procedures, the do’s and don’ts and they need to be trained properly.



Proper orientation and training of new employees should be a part of the resource management strategy for any farming operation. Training will provide farmworkers with the following information:

- They will know the reason for the job they are doing
- Staff will know more about the process than they did before
- They might understand something not previously understood
- Employees will develop new skills
- Information will be shared to let staff know where to go for assistance if required
- Management can pass along know how to get the job done safely and correctly

The Agriculture industry has numerous occupational hazards including physical, chemical, biological, ergonomic and psychosocial. The complexity and range of hazards require that farm workers receive safety and health training. Although educational interventions cannot control all of the hazards that agricultural workers encounter, education and training are needed to make workers aware of the hazards they may encounter, to provide them with tools that they can use in protecting themselves, and to make them aware of the regulations that are in place to protect them.

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Canadian Agricultural Safety Week is March 15-21, 2015. For more information about how you can “Be the Difference”, please visit agsafetyweek.ca.

